



ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

THE Arun flows right past the *Black Rabbit*, and is a favourite route to Littlehampton on the sea. By this route the folk of Arundel come and go, and the *Black Rabbit* itself, nestling under the castle, makes a comfortable living for its ancient boniface. For there always is the steady trade of the place itself, and no one knows when an artist, attracted by the picturesque surroundings, will drop down for a week, or when a bevy of girls, perhaps a sketching class, will overrun the place with paint and prattle.

It is withal a quiet inn, almost as quiet as the river in midsummer, and for days nothing more exciting will happen than the bounding of a stag from a thicket or the strutting of a peacock on the lawn.

I had come down with Macnab, the cattle painter, and had nothing to do but stumble around into other people's business and make a few pen-

and-ink sketches of items that interested me. I have found that artists are not a practical, warfaring class, nor are they seriously reckoned with in philosophical zones like recruiting offices, and so it was we found ourselves recruiting subjects for pictures, instead of shouldering a rifle and joining Kitchener's army.

Both "Mac" and I had heard before leaving London that they were killing people at the Front, so we decided not to go. For neither of us would make a picturesque casualty. Nor did we fancy ourselves stretched out on the field of honour, although Mac is just the kind of chap who would win the coveted Victoria Cross first day out. I can fancy him now dropping his gun and running at top speed to save the life of some poor devil shot in the back. One would be sure to find Mac where the bullets were the thickest, most probably in the ammunition wagon, for he always fancied some job in the commissariat department, where he could make sure of getting



"I dreamt last night that one of them, with a curved dagger, stood on guard at the foot of my bed."

his tea regularly every afternoon before killing a Uhlan.

And now the question arises, who is Mac? If ever you go to London and should amble into the Aroma Club, just hold up the first man you meet and ask, "Are you Mac?"

You may get a momentary shock from the more than convivial expression on the face of the man accused, but just allow him two minutes to recover from the compliment and he will tell you that Mac is upstairs with some of the greatest wits, authors, actors and painters in England, discussing his latest triumph on canvas, "The Angel of Peace".

One would never imagine, until after spending a night with Mac at the *Black Rabbit* that he was anything of a mystic, or that he believed in "visitations" or supernatural phenomena. But at the same time, at least, he dabbled in the occult. My first inkling of this was when we were sketching the Castle from the top of a beautiful slope, which is part of the Norfolk estate. I was telling him that Tierney asserted that the keep may have been built in the time of Alfred and that before Alfred's time, it was conceded, Saxon architecture was Ecclesiastical in its entirety, that Alfred did away with the wooden huts and houses of both the nobles and the poor, and by his direction buildings of stone took their places and castles were built on sites which appeared most appropriate to prevent the landing of invaders and for arresting foes.

At this juncture a sharp penetrating rustling was heard in the thicket to our right. Mac sprang from his sketching-stool like a flash.

"What's that?" he yelled.

"A Uhlan," I replied.

I snatched my daub from the easel and rushed over to him.

"Use this as a shield," I said. "Ample protection."

"Not I," said Mac, clenching his mallet firmly in his teeth and arming himself with a huge brush laden with Prussian blue. "Let the blighters come on. Only wish I had the 'Angel of Peace' here to show them what I really think of them."

Just then a stag bounded into the open.

Mac breathed a long sigh of relief, and, leaning over, begged the loan of a match. I asked what he really thought of the Kaiser.

"Words fail me!" said the ardent painter. "But he'll get it! He'll get it! I wouldn't mind fighting a tiger, but no thank you to a Gurkha. It's a Sunday school picnic, Rush, to a Gurkha. Do you know," he said confidentially, "I dreamt last night one of them, with a curved dagger, stood



"The flock of Peacocks I was painting, dropped their tails."

on guard at the foot of my bed."

But all the while he was painting vigorously, and I could see he had the beginning of a masterpiece that would excel Turner's water-colour in the Duke's collection in the castle, which was made from the same spot; but he couldn't keep his mind off the war.

"Get a few healthy Sikhs on the job," he muttered, half to himself, "all jabbering Hindu at the same time—it's much worse than exploding shrapnel. What would you do if you saw a turban standing with a knife, like I did?"

I attempted an answer, but Mac followed right on:

"I think our Tommies," he said, "will have to retire with a pension. Can't you see Tommy standing on the street-corner in Flanders looking for a job, all on account of the Indians. History repeats itself, Rush. The Sikhs were an intensely religious peo-

ple, but through the persecution and ravages of the Mohammedans, they had to take up weapons in sheer self-defence. They became a great military people and conquered the Mohammedans.

"History repeats itself," I interposed.

"Right O," sniffed Mac. "Just imagine William's pet Prussians shelling this old landmark! And they would do it, too, but it's a tricky bit of drawing, old top. Talk about strategy: here's something that would make von Kluck look forty ways for Paris. Wouldn't they like to loot it, the darlings? Nothing the Crown Prince would like better than to walk off with Gainsborough's fine portrait of Charles Howard, the 11th Duke. KUL-TUR! Petty larceny, I call it."

Between the war and the complicated subject before him, I could see Mac was getting greatly involved.



"Just imagine William's pet Prussians shelling this old landmark."

"Rather intricate," I remarked casually to my fellow dauber.

"R-rather isn't the word," he stammered, "d-d-damned difficult! But just think of the retreat from Mons."

"For art's sake, Mac, let up on the war; let's talk painting and the castle. A chronological survey might help with the construction of our pictures. You know numerous barons accompanied William the Conqueror on his invasion of this country."

"What?" interrupted Mac absent-mindedly. "William? Invasion?"

The very suggestion of a possible invasion started him off again.

"I'd like to kill a few 'hogfritters' myself, but they'll do it—they'll do it—in the night—in a very nasty way!"

"Who? What?" I stammered.

"They'll steal up through the grass like snakes, and then—"

With the approaching twilight, Mac's uncanny outbursts were beginning to make the whole atmosphere a bit spookish.

"A very sad story, Rush," he said, leaning over and poking me in the ribs with a brush. "A German unfortunately met a Gurkha in the evening. Chance acquaintance without an introduction—uncultured beasts!"

"I'm entrenching on your hospitality," said the Gurkha, as he tickled Fritz with his knife. "Can't you see the little Black standing on a heap of corpses and weeping bitterly because there are no more Prussians to tickle?"

"Stop!" I insisted, as a cold shiver ran down my spine, and I pulled an imaginary sword out of the back of my neck.

It was chill October, and Mac rose from his stool to set up circulation. The stags at once grouped themselves in sculpturesque fashion around us, and then bounded in unholy discord. As he extended his malstick, the group of peacocks I was painting in the foreground of my picture, dropped their tails and did the "goose-step" down the embankment. The fact



"Mac, in some mysterious way, got possession of the paper."

is, he had every form of animal life in the park circulating.

"Mac, this is an armistice," I said, placing a paint rag on the top of his sun-guard, the umbrella.

He paid no attention, but blustered right on:

"The Gurkhas don't send a telegram to say they are coming, they just steal quietly through the grass, regardless of hospitality. Rush, just fancy a German in the trenches with a Gurkha looking over and saying, 'I hope I see you well.'"

"How about the Zouaves?" I asked.

"Mere amateurs," replied Mac, "the Kaiser wouldn't mind losing a thousand Death's Head Hussars to get a Gurkha."

"Let up on India and the war; I'm fed up," I said disgustedly, as great beads of cold perspiration spotted the brow of my irate pal, who was pulling himself together as if preparing to make another attack on a German close formation.

The light was failing, and our effects had passed.

"Fine night for the trenches," Mac groaned, and in his effort to reach for his paint-box he fell off his stool. Though he sat on his palette, he was still undaunted. I directed his attention to several blotches of pigment on the tails of his coat, and the seat of his trousers, but he was little concerned, for I could see there was to be still another *débauché* before we packed up our kits.

I handed him a rag saturated with turpentine, and he twisted himself in all sorts of acrobatic postures, trying to get at the other side of his trousers, which, to say the least, were not walking towards the *Black Rabbit*. I told him that if he were to cut out the seat of his trousers and frame them that he would have something quite as much in character with Arundel Castle as the impression he had made on canvas.

"How does it look, Rush?" he ask-

ed, stepping back a few paces from his easel.

"Very brutal!" I said. "You can't be killing Germans all day and dreaming about Gurkhas all night and get much romance into your art. The next time we come out, we'll take every nook and crannie of the old building and dissect it."

"Dissect it!" exclaimed Mac with disgust.

"Yes—why not?" I replied.

"I don't like the word," Mac objected. "It sounds like a surgical operation. No sentiment. A-ah, blood—booh!"

"Well, then," I remonstrated, "a little Turco research or Gurkha technique, if it's sentiment you are looking for."

"By the bye," said Mac, with a smirk, "the little Hindoo can give those African Frenchies lessons in anatomy."

Fearing another Prussian massacre, I took out my handkerchief and waved it in front of him.

"A truce! A truce!" I yelled, but it had almost the same effect as a

scarlet shawl before an angry bull—in this instance a regular John Bull.

A thick gray haze was effervescing from the ground, and Mac, standing shivering on the hill, placarded against the fading sky, looked a sad sketch. Then he gave a start and looking where he stared, I saw, for all the world, a Hindoo, robe, turban and all, approaching the inn.

I suggested to Mac that we had better not return along the beaten highroad, giving the excuse that if the Duke should see us walking off his estate he might have us arrested as spies.

"Spies," exclaimed Mac, with disgust. "We'll be giving them grand opera at Covent Garden next. Isn't it the limit. Look at that turban. I saw him all right. I think I'll keep away for a bit."

"For the love of Mike!" I remonstrated; "it's dinner I want, Hindoos and spies after, if you like."

Soon we were on the march home, and my fellow dauber was sighing heavily, partly from fatigue, but more from the effect of his occult experi-



The Black Rabbit looking from the Arun



"'Are your rooms comfortable,' asked the old 'uzzy.'"

ences. By the time we arrived at the *Rabbit*, he had finished off every spy in England.

"What's the latest?" shouted Mae, on catching sight of Dan Lee, our host, who was standing in the door of the inn and reading the war news.

"Latest?" returned Lee, looking up at Mae. It was very difficult to tell which was the more ardent patriot. "Look! Look!" shouted Lee, rushing towards Mae, waving a paper at arm's length.

The two giants collided, and both sprawled out on the ground; but Mae, in some mysterious way, got possession of the paper, and Lee yelled, as Mae retired to the public room. "They've captured the guns—fourteen of them—the 9th Lancers!"

As I ambled upstairs, I could hear them chattering their heads off, and I caught sight of the turban resting quietly in a corner.

I had just seated myself at the dinner-table when the bulwark of Eng-

land entered the door at the top of the stairs.

"Read that, Rush," he said, "it's the best appetizer yet. William won't be enjoying his evening meal as we are."

"As we *are*!" I remonstrated, and poor little Nellie, the waitress, stood idly by, trembling like a refugee from Termonde.

"What will you have to drink, sir?" asked the demure little maid.

"Something with fourteen glasses in it," replied Mae—"one for each gun." (Simultaneously he arranged his afternoon's work on a chair before him, and then sat down). "And very nice, too," he commented, rubbing his fretful brow and looking down on a very succulent brace of pheasants.

The vintage served, I extended my glass.

"A toast—what will it be, Mae?"

"My friends, the little Gurkhas," he replied. "The Germans'll be so frightened of the little black demons



"Not very," says I. "Most fleas this year than we've had in the history of the place."

they'll pass the word along and there'll be a Marathon race back to Berlin. Gad, I wouldn't wait." And while he was speaking in walked the Hindoo and sat down at our table.

"To the bullet!" I said, extending my glass.

"Something sardonic about that, Rush," replied Mac. "The Kaiser, I infer."

"A-h—something—" I suggested.

Hardly a word was uttered until Nellie reappeared with the dessert.

"Any new arrivals at the *Rabbit* lately?" I asked Nellie, with both eyes fixed on Mac.

"Yes, sir," replied Nellie, "we 'ave a German 'ere from Glasgow, and 'e's so 'ard to please. Mrs. Lee's prepared some nice sausages for 'im, and 'e snorted and said 'e 'adn't an appetite."

"What!" roared Mac, rising. "German? German? Where is the little pet? Perhaps he's just read about the battle of the Marne."

The Hindoo paid no attention to us.

"Sit down," I said, grabbing the impetuous growler by the arm.

"Oh! 'e's leavin' in the mornin', sir," said Nellie; "'e saw you and Mr. Lee readin' the poiper, and 'e 'adn't no appetite."

Mac looked up, and little Nell recoiled under the glance of his wicked eye.

"Tell the Governor I want to see him right away."

Nellie scurried away, and in less than a jiffy Lee was up.

"I hear you've a German in the house, Lee," said Mac.

"E's 'armless," replied Lee, with a smile, but he continued laughingly, "I've just 'ad a remarkable time with an old 'uzzy who wanted a room 'ere. Of all the questions ever put to a mortal man, dead or alive, she takes the cake. First of all, while she was a talkin', in comes a customer. 'E ordered a glass of beer. 'Appy days,' says 'e. 'Kills at forty yards,' says I. Then she chirps in, 'All my relations died from drink,

even my old father, who was found dead in bed, when he was eighty-nine—drink killed 'im.'"

"He's a German, just the same," interrupted Mac.

"Well, as I was about to say," continued Lee, "the German, 'e was a-sittin' in the corner, and 'e piped in, 'Beer never killed heem, your fottor diet for the vant of breath.'"

"Where is he, the blighter?" still persisted Mac, picking up the carving-knife.

"'Are your rooms very comfortable?' asked the old 'uzzy," Lee continued. "Not very," says I. "Most fleas this year we've 'ad in the 'istory of the ploice." She picked up 'er satchel and walked out without sayin' even a good-bye. Well, gentlemen, what would you 'ave done in such a circumstance?"

"Given her the iron cross," said Mac.

"What would you 'ave done, Mr. Rushwell?" asked Lee.

"Married her off to the German," I replied.

"Well," laughed Lee, "I watched 'er walkin' up the road. I wish you could a seen 'er. She'd walk five yards, then drop 'er satchel and feel 'erself all over. She took 'er 'at off and clawed 'er 'air, and would stop and paw one leg with the other. This went on for nearly a mile. She must a 'ad a million fleas on 'er time she got to Arundel."

"Well, Mac, you and Lee can fight it out," I said, "I'm going to turn in early, right after coffee."

"What! you night hawk?" groaned Mac.

"Yes, I'm going to tackle an early morning effect to-morrow—must have something to show before going back to town."

"No engagements to-night, eh, what?" asked Mac sarcastically.

"None," I assured him.

I busied myself getting my paraphernalia ready for the morning, and as Nellie appeared with the coffee I instructed Lee to call me at five

o'clock. I lighted my pipe and poured two glasses of brandy.

"Here's good-night, all," I said, "and five o'clock, Lee. I suppose, now, I'll be seeing—" but I caught myself as I looked back and saw the Hindoo.

With that the Easterner rose and expressed his interest in art. I stepped back into the room, because I wished to hear what he had to say about art, especially East Indian art, and to ask whether there was a painter in India whose work could take a place in Western estimation that would equal the place taken by Tagore. He had very little to say in favour of Tagore, but he praised greatly the decorations of a fellow-countryman named Hindra Singh. But it was in handicrafts, as he said, that the Orientals excelled, and he gave us an intimate discourse on metal work, inlaying, and carving. As to himself, he said, he had come to England to study the landscape, and he seemed delighted to know that Mac was a landscape painter. When I left him, he and Mac were completing plans for a sketching expedition the following day. Then Mac entered his own room.

I closed my door, but I could overhear him reciting from Wellington's memoirs, and shouting in very bitter accents: "The Duke, writing to his mother in 1807, said, 'I can assure you that from the general of the Germans down to the smallest drum-boy in their legion, the earth never groaned with such a set of murdering, infamous villains. They murdered, robbed and ill-treated the peasantry wherever they went.'"

All was quiet for a minute. Then I heard Mac's door open, and then a muffled call to Lee.

"How about that German?" Mac asked in a whisper.

"Oh, don't worry about 'im, Mr. MacNab, 'e's leavin' in the mornin'. Somethink funny about 'im, too. 'E must be an artist like yourself."

"Is everyone an artist around here? Hasn't dropped any bombs



"And I'm the original British lion," said the boatman.

about the place, has he, Lee?"

"No, no; 'e's a 'armless, good-natured-appearing sort of a bloke. Says 'e 'ates the Prussians. Well, good-night. I've got to get 'im up early."

The night passed on, and all was silent about the *Rabbit* until long after midnight. Then a peculiar noise outside caused me to rise and peer through the window. There was just enough light for me to discern two figures struggling on the ground. One of them, as I made out, was the Hindoo, while the other, as I caught sight of his beard and heavy visage, convinced me that he was the German.

The Hindoo had the other down, and the fingers of his right hand gripped him at the throat.

"So you were thinking of slipping away," he said, no longer in broken English. "Well, you are going to slip away all right, but not in the manner you expected. A launch is at this moment drawing up at the landing. I'm going to put you aboard, and if you attempt to get away I'll shoot you like a dog."

The two got up and walked quietly down to the landing. I saw them board the launch, and in a few minutes they passed out of sight. I went back to bed.

Promptly at five o'clock Lee rapped at my door, but the incident of the earlier morning had put me out of humour for work, so I turned over and groaned. Then I heard Lee

thumping on the German's door and then on the Hindoo's.

"What's the matter?" shouted Mac, roused by the repeated knocking.

"Can't get 'em up," said Lee.

"Why don't you knock the door down? It wouldn't sound any worse."

With that Lee opened the German's door.

"He's gone!" he shouted. "He must be down at breakfast."

"How about the Hindoo?"

"He's gone, too."

I heard Mac's feet strike the floor.

"Perhaps he expects me to go out with him early," he said, as he started to dress.

Lee below was in earnest discussion with the boatman, and presently Mac joined them.

"What's up?" asked Mac.

"Don't know," said Lee, "but I'm John Bull here on the spot if it comes to anything."

"And I'm the original British lion," said the boatman, "but I'll be hanged if they haven't put one over on me."

"Then I dub myself the lion's tail," said Mac, "because in this you can twist me anyway you like."

They went over to examine the landing and to peer carefully as far as eye could reach along the river.

Presently I went down, and underneath my window I picked up something very much like a badge that might be worn by a detective from Scotland Yard.

